reasonable price of Oil palm Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFBs). Besides, to reduce the adverse effect of import of edible oil on domestic prices of Palm oil, Govenment has increased import duty on refined vegetable oils of edible grade (other than coconut oil, RBD palm kernel oil and palm stearin), in loose or bulk form from 16.5% to 27.5% with effect from 30.12.99.

Agri-Business consortium for small Farmers

768. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the composition and duties assigned to the Agri-business consortium for small farmers;

(b) which are the district in Orissa recommended by the Government of Orissa and for the current period;

(c) progress made in the first phase so far; and

(d) which are the other districts of Orissa proposed to be included?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The composition of the Board of Management of Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) is given in statement-I (*See* below). The duties assigned to the SFAC are given at Statement-II (*See* below).

(b) and (c) Nil

(d) Ganjam and Gajapati districts of Orissa are proposed to be taken up after finalisation of the plan by the Agriculture Finance Corporation Ltd.

Statement-I

Composition of the Board of Management of the Small Farmers' Agri-Business consortium (SFAC)

According to clause 7 of the Articles of Assocation of SFAC, there shall be a Board of Management consisting of 15 members. The Union Agriculture Minister shall be the President of the Board of Management and the Union Agriculture Secretary shall be its ex-

officio Vice President. The Chief Executive to the SFAC shall be the mamber-Secretary of the Board.

The remaining tweleve (12) members, shall be nominated/ elected as under:

(a) The four members shall be nominated by the President from the concerned Ministries/Departments, Government and semi-Government organisation.

(b) The elected members shall consist of two each from the following categories:

(i) Financial Institutions and Banks.

(ii) Statutory and Autonomous Organisations/Developments Boards, Export Promotion Councils, and Commodity Boards dealing in agriculture and agro industries;

(iii) NGOs/Farmers' organisations, working in rural areas.

(iv) Beneficiaries, including individual farmers, cooperative societies, private companies, exporters, etc.

Statement-II

Functions and Duties of Small Farmers' Agri-Business consortium

In furtherance of the Aims & Objects of the Society, indicated in the Memorandum of Association, the SFAC may undertake itself and/or cause to be undertaken by the concerned Departments/ Agencies/Units, one or more of the following tasks or activities in addition to any other tasks or activities as may be considered to be appropriate and necessary:

(i) Organise, assist and help initiatives for improving the production and productivity levels of identified agricultural produce;

(ii) Organise, assist and help establishment of appropriate link/ integral arrangements between production and marketing;

(iii) Facilitate development of a sound marketing infrastructure covering inter-alia establishment of processing units, quality control arrangements, market intelligence and information, transportation and storage and such other arrangements as may be necessary;

(iv) Arrange/promote market studies and/or specific commodity surveys at the field levels, both at home and abroad, with a view to identifying the agricultural products which have potential for exports and export development, quality standards and specifications, competitive price levels, trading channels, delivery schedules, measures, etc.;

(v) Arrange/facilitate the formulation of integrated Commercial development programmes or projects preferably firm or unit-wise setting out, inter alia, products for export targets, the import needs of raw materials etc., processing arrangements between the producers and exporters, marketing, etc;

(vi) Assist/organise mounting of Export Promotion Programmes, including the sponsoring of marketing teams, participation in specialised fairs and exhibitions, holding of Departments Stores promotions, exclusive India Show;

(vii) Facilitate identification and establishment of arrangements for undertaking production for export and help in meeting the import needs, ensuring quality standards, reaching suitable marketing tie-ups;

(viii) Facilitate/monitor transport arrangements, under the specific programmes and projects, that may be formulated;

(ix) Facilitate/monitor storage arrangements under the specific programmes and projects, that may be formulated; and

(x) Facilitate/monitor the conclusion of contractual arrangements according to established commercial practices and norms.